[15th February 1958

Fair price shops

* 3 *S.N.Q.*—Sri N. K. PALANISAMI : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any instructions have been issued to close all fair price shops from 1st March 1958; and

(*b*) if so, the reasons therefor?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (*a*) & (*b*) The Government have ordered that the sale of rice through the fair price shops in the State shall be stopped with effect from 1st March 1958. Wheat will however be continued to be sold in the fair price shops on the present scale. The fair price shops *will not therefore be closed* with effect from 1st March 1958, as presumed by the Honourable member.

The Government had to issue the above orders in view of the fact that the Government of India have agreed to supply rice to the fair price shops only upto the end of February 1958 and secondly the rice position is likely to improve in view of the current samba harvest and it may be possible for the public to get their requirements of rice in the market at a reasonable price.

Mr. SPEAKER : The Hon. Minister may answer the other questions also on this subject. All the members can put supplementary questions after the answers are given.

* 4 *S.N.Q.*—Sri N. K. PALANISAMI : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state whether the Government propose to call for tenders for the purchase of 20,000 tons of rice for returning the loan taken from the Union Government?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : The question whether rice has to be procured from Tanjore district out of the current samba harvest for returning the rice loan taken from the Government of India is still under consideration.

* 128 *Q.*—Sri N. K. PALANISAMI : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(*a*) the quantity of rice stock with the Government during 1957;

(*b*) the number of relief shops opened in the State during 1957;

(*c*) the quantity of wheat and rice supplied to them during the year 1957; and

(*d*) the retail selling price of rice in the relief shops?

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THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (*a*) The Madras Government had no stock of rice with them. The supply of rice to the fair price shops in the State was made by the Regional Director (Food), Madras, from Central stocks held in the State.

(*b*) The number of fair price shops functioning in the State during 1957 varied from time to time. There were about 2,000 fair price shops during January 1957 which was reduced to 665 in February. Thereafter the number fluctuated and gradually increased to 935 shops at the end of September 1957. From 1st October 1957 the number was reduced by 50 per cent and there were only 483 fair price shops during October and upto 25th November 1957. Again the number of shops was increased and there were about 750 fair price shops functioning at the end of December 1957.

(*c*) A quantity of 66,904 tons of rice was supplied to the fair price shops in the State by the Regional Director (Food), Madras, during 1957.

Up to 25th November 1957, the Regional Director (Food), Madras, was issuing wheat to merchants including fair price shopkeepers for sale to consumers. Information regarding the quantity of wheat supplied to fair price shopkeepers alone upto 25th November 1957 is not available. From 25th November 1957 the Government ordered that wheat should also be issued to consumers from fair price shops. The quantity of wheat issued to the fair price shops from 25th November 1957 upto 31st December 1957 was 3,656 tons.

(*d*) The retail issue price of rice (II sort) from the fair price shops at different centres in the State ranges from 71 nP. to 75 nP. per Madras measure. American fine rice is now being issued temporarily through fair price shops in Madras City. The retail issue price of this rice is 85 nP. per Madras measure.

* 129 *Q.*—SRI V. K. KOTHANDARAMAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state the number of fair price shops opened during the year 1957 in the State, district-wise?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : The attention of the honourable Member is invited to the answer to clause (*b*) of Starred Question No. 128 of Sri N. K. Palanisami, M.L.A.

A statement* showing the number of fair price shops functioning in the State district-wise at different periods during 1957 is placed on the table of the House.

* 130. *Q.*—SRI V. K. KOTHANDARAMAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state whether the Government have any proposals to start fair price shops in Vellore and Ambur (North Arcot district)?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : No, Sir.

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* Printed as Appendix on page 574 infra.